

Family and Community Engagement

LEADING PRACTICES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Welcoming School Culture: These practices include: welcoming attitudes, protocols, and language used by front office staff; having diverse greeters that family visitors can recognize; signage and appearance of the school; availability of language interpreters and materials in native languages used by families; processes (for enrollment, inquiries, etc.) that enable rather than impede family and partner engagement.

Quick Introductions

[High Expectations Parental Services:](#) Specific guidelines for organizing and conducting a Family Friendly Schools Walkthrough, using the New Jersey Family Friendly Schools Assessment (Video)

[Houston Independent School District:](#) Family Friendly Schools (Video)

[Ohio Department of Education:](#) Engaging Families with a Welcoming Climate

Deeper Dives

[SEDL. A New Day: Family, School, and Community Engagement in Education Reform.](#) Webinar

[SEDL. Bringing It All Together. Family and Community Engagement Policies In Action](#) Webinar

[Swift Education Center, University of Kansas:](#) Guide with rubric for assessing whether school environment is welcoming

[University of Minnesota Extension:](#) Practices that promote schools as welcoming communities

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction:](#) Family/Community Engagement: Welcoming Environment (2) (Video)





Enrollment Outreach: Reaching out to families in order to recruit students for their schools.

Enrollment outreach overlaps with the first stages of family-school communications, in that the first contacts establish the basis for an ongoing developmental relationship between families and educators.

Quick Introduction

[ASCD: How Schools Can Recruit Hard-to-Reach Parents](#)

Deeper Dives

[Center on Reinventing Public Education: Creating Savvy choosers. Informing Families About School choices](#)

[Charter School Center: Intentionally Diverse Charter Schools: A Toolkit for Charter School Leaders](#)

[Indiana Department of Education: School Marketing and Student Enrollment Support \(Bright Minds Marketing webinars and resources\)](#)

[New York City Charter School Center: Start Right – Enrollment & Recruitment: Student Recruitment and Lottery](#)

[SchoolMint: Framework for Effective Student Recruitment](#)

[Vanderbilt Peabody College: Starting Strong: Best Practices in Starting Charter Schools.](#) See especially “Recruiting Students”

Home Visits: Visits by teachers and educators to a student’s family at their home. The name of this practice implies that visits take place most commonly in the home. However, some circumstances may suggest visiting with families in fast food places, coffee shops, or some other neutral place in the community

Quick Introductions

[Build Initiative: Home visits.](#) The rationale (Includes template letter and debrief form)

[Colorin Colorado: Making Your First ELL Home Visit: A Guide for Classroom Teachers](#)

[Student, Family, and Community Support Department – San Francisco Unified School District: A Guide to Team Home Visits](#)

Deeper Dives

[Flamboyant Foundation: Home Visit Training Videos.](#) In addition to the training video shown here, Flamboyant provides several other resources on home visits.

[Parent Teacher Home Visit Project. Toolbox of Best Practices.](#) Includes guides, training webinars, videos, and many other tools. This organization pioneered Home Visits and provides a rich repository of resources on this practice



Regular, Positive Communications: The goal of all communications is to develop and deepen the relationship with families. Initial steps to establish the basis for a relationship are critical and overlap with other leading practices including Enrollment Outreach and Home Visits. Face to face conversations are particularly valuable, whether they take place at homes, community settings or at the school. However, other means of communications provide important supplement face to face meetings, including personal phone calls, personal emails and texts, and written letters.

Quick Introductions

[**Build Initiative:** Two-way communication for teachers.](#)

[**Build Initiative:** A Template for Conversations Between Families and Teachers](#)

[San Bernardino City Schools: Relationship Building: Parent/Teacher Communication](#) (Video)

Deeper Dives

[**North Carolina Department of Public Instruction:** Creating a Culture of Two-Way Communication](#)

[**Build Initiative:** Digital Communications Toolkit](#)

[**Change Kids Lives:** Difficult Parent Conversations: A Guide for Success](#)

[**Flamboyant Foundation:** Relationship Building – Ongoing Communications](#)

[**Flamboyant Foundation:** A Parent Reflects on Building Relationships with Families.](#)

[**Institute of Education Sciences:** Building trusting relationships with families and community through effective communication](#)

[**SEDL. Teacher-Parent Relationship: Using Professional Development to Improve Family & Community Engagement**](#)
Webinar





Communications & Conferences Aligned with Learning: Conferences about student performance. conferences allow teachers to engage families in providing appropriate leadership in student learning and academic performance, as well as addressing behavioral issues including chronic absence. Research confirms the effectiveness of several models for conferences. These include Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT – supported nationally by WestEd)), Student Led Conferences, and others.

Quick Introductions

[Build Initiative: Conversation to Share Data with Families](#)

[Global Family Research Project: Parent-Teacher Conferences: Strategies for Principals, Teachers, and Parents](#)

Deeper Dives

[Edutopia: Student-Led Conferences: Resources for Educators](#)

[Flamboyant Foundation: Goal Setting Conference](#)

[Teacher Vision: Teacher-Parent Conferences](#)

[SEDL: Data-Driven: Making School and Student Data Accessible and Meaningful to Families](#) Webinar

[SEDL: Improving Family & Community Engagement Through Sharing Data. Briefing Paper \(2012\)](#)

[Shelby County Schools: Learn More About APTT Here! Academic Parent Teacher Teams](#) (Video)

[Utah State Board of Education: Academic Parent-Teacher Teams \(APTT\) by WestEd](#)

[WestEd: Academic Parent Teacher Teams \(APTT\).](#) The company licenses the model for APTT.

Family Events: Educators can use events to inform families about academic goals and programs and engage them in supporting student learning at home. (Math nights, literacy events.) Events such as resource fairs can introduce families to tools, services, and supports available from community partners and the schools.

[Cities of Service: Homework Diner Blueprint](#)

[The Family Engagement Collaborative of the Miami Valley:](#) Family Engagement Event Ideas

[Family Math Night: Hosting a Family Math Night Resource](#)

[PTO Today: Doughnuts with Dad and More](#)

[Project Appleseed: Family Engagement Activities](#)

[PTO Answers: 57 Fabulous Family Fun Events](#)



Family Leadership Development: As families grow in taking on new responsibilities in schools and as school support their development of new leadership skills, knowledge, and confidence, they increasingly step into leadership roles in schools. Evidence-based programs such as FAST (Families and Schools Together), Parent Cafes (nationally supported by Be Strong Families), and Study Circles (Everyday Democracy), as well as locally developed Parent Universities introduce information in a reflective environment to build on family funds of knowledge that increases the ability of adults to take on more complex and challenging roles in schools and the community.

Quick Introductions

[Georgia Department of Education: Building Parent Leadership](#)

Deeper Dives

[Be Strong Families: What is a Parent Café?](#) (Video)

[Be Strong Families: Sponsoring organization for Parent Cafes.](#) In the “Resources” tab, find many tools including “Parent Café in a Box”

[Center for the Study of Social Policy: Using Café Conversations to Build Protective Factors and Parent Leadership](#)

[Everyday Democracy](#): Provides training and resource to use Study Circles as methods of civic engagement, including around issues of education

[FAST \(Families and Schools Together\)](#) : Website for the national FAST organization, with resources for schools and districts.

[Montgomery County Public Schools: MCPS Study Circles Program](#)

[Sustaining Community: A World Cafe in a school](#) – a step-by-step description. From Australia, a very detailed description of using world café formatted discussion in a school





Family Organizations in Schools: Family organizations enabled by the school frequently play roles that support the school and educators with fund raising, organizing extra curriculars, and presenting family events. Charter schools organized as independent nonprofits may have family members that serve on the governing board of directors or trustees, with overall fiduciary responsibility for the school, creating policy, and employing the school's CEO or Head.

Quick Introductions

[Education Board Partners: Video on a parent's role on a charter board](#)

[Federal Way Schools, State of Washington: Video about family leadership and voice in this school system.](#)

[PTAs Leading the Way in Transformative Family Engagement](#)

Deeper Dives

[Annie Casey Foundation: Engaging Parents, Developing Leaders. A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Nonprofits and Schools](#)

[Charter School Center: Enhancing Charter Schools through Parent Involvement](#)

[Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center – ECLKC: Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series: Families advocates and Leaders](#)

[National Association for Education of Young Children-NAEYC: Facilitated Leadership and Family Engagement — Learning with and from Families](#) (Webinar)

[National PTA: Leadership Series:](#) webinars for PTA leaders, educators, and family and community engagement professionals

[Guide to National PTA Resources](#)

[National Charter School Resource Center: I Just Joined A Charter School Board...Now What?](#) (video)

[Chicago Tonight: Local School Councils: What They Do and the Challenges They Face](#)

[Community Empowered Schools: Envisioning Schools:](#) This video examines how communities and schools can work together through Local School Councils, a school governance model from Chicago.

[Rachel Dickson, Parents Participate in Local School Councils.](#) Bilingual video on parent participants explain why LSCs are important to them.



LEADING PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Coordinator and School-Community Site Team: In a school that has built strategic and effective partnerships, those partners come together on a regular basis with school leaders, educators, and families. The team coordinates activities of the partners; monitors results of actions; considers emerging needs of students, families, and schools; seeks additional partners and resources; and celebrates successes while continuously improving quality.

Quick Introductions

[Coalition for Community Schools: How to Start a Community School, Building a Leadership Team and Hiring a Coordinator](#)

[National Network of Partnership Schools: Action Teams for Partnerships](#)

Deeper Dives

[Cincinnati Public Schools: Guide to Resource Coordinators](#)

[Evansville Vanderburgh Community School Corporation: School Community Council – Working Together for Student Success. Video](#)

[Riverside County Office of Education: Action Team Partnerships \(ATP\)](#)

[SEDL: Creating Collaborative Action Teams: Working Together for Student Success](#)

[WNET/Education: Concept to Classroom:](#) Key principles behind partnership programs and offer a step-by-step guide for putting them into action.

Asset Mapping to Identify Partners: First used in community development, the idea of bringing an asset-based, rather than a deficit-based, mindset now has been adapted in many community engagement strategies. Asset-mapping enables the identification of a wide range of possible partners: people, community and faith-based associations, neighborhoods, businesses, nonprofits, and institutions like universities, hospitals, and government agencies.

Quick Introductions

[Northwest Education Regional Laboratory: “Mapping Community Assets Workbook – Strengthening Community Education: The Basis for Sustainable Renewal.”](#) A guidebook to asset mapping for schools

Deeper Dives

[Asset-Based Community Development Institute, DePaul University:](#) Resources List contains many practical and theoretical guides as to how to go about identifying and recruiting community assets as partners in schools. ABCDI first developed and disseminated the concepts of asset mapping.

[Community Toolbox: Identifying Community Assets and Resources.](#) A comprehensive guide to the practice of asset mapping, part of a larger web-based resource collection on community building and development.

[Southern Poverty Law Center, Unlocking Your Community’s Hidden Strengths: A Guide to Community Asset Mapping](#)



School – Community Partnerships: Educators can recruit and engage a wide variety of community partners to support their efforts. Community partnerships can be specific, limited to a certain project or by time, like business sponsorship of a school event.

Quick Introductions

[Education Week: A How-To Guide for Building School-Community Partnerships](#)

[ExpandedED Schools: 10 Ways to Build School-Community Partnerships](#) (Video)

Deeper Dives

[Colorado Education Initiative: Designing Community Partners to Expand Student Learning: A Toolkit](#)

[Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA: School-Community Partnerships: A Guide](#)

[Edutopia: Resources for Building Community Partnerships](#)

[SEDL: Building Strategic Partnerships to Foster Community Engagement in Education \(Webinar\)](#)



COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL

Quick Introductions

[American Federation of Teachers. Teachers talk about Community Schools](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools: Frequently asked questions about Community Schools.](#)

[Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative and Center for Community School Strategies, Community Service Council.](#) A local organizing and technical assistance provider for community schools, affiliated with United Way.

Deeper Dives

[American Federation of Teachers: Community Schools.](#) AFT supports the Community Schools model nationally and has researched practice and evidence.

[Center for American Progress. Building Community School Systems.](#)

[Communities in Schools: Work To Be Done: Communities in Schools Strategic Business Plan 2018 -2022.](#)

[Communities in Schools:](#) An evidence-based model that utilizes a school- based coordinator to connect resources with the schools and students that need them most

[Coalition for Community Schools: Community Schools Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools: Promoting Student Success - A Rationale and Results Framework](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools: Community Schools Leadership Network \(CSLN\)](#) - An active network of Community School Initiative leaders that provides a home for professional learning and the innovative and courageous advancement of the field.

[Colorin Colorado, Community Engagement Coordinator.](#) As part of their national support for teaching English Language Learners (ELL), Colorin Colorado recognizes the value of Community Schools and the role of the Community Engagement Coordinator.

[Learning Policy Institute: Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement](#)

[National Education Association: The Six Pillars of Community Schools. NEA Resource Guide for Educators, Families, and Communities](#)

[National Education Association: Community School Strategy Webinars \(6 part series\)](#) - These webinars explored implementation methods, success stories, and lessons learned from the field. Rural, urban, and suburban settings from across the nation were featured throughout the series.

[National Education Association: Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy \(An Interactive Guide\)](#)